

MASTER

There's a Cuban fellow
hand rolling cigars inside
pipe shop next to Tower
theater. People early to a
show stop & watch him
thru store windows. His
hands work in a relaxed
knowing way. His cigars
costing one forty & up
are stacked a foot deep
on counter behind him.
I buy two. Smoke one outside
at home & stick one in
Ken's mailbox at school.
These are good cigars
& remind me of Upmans
we used to buy & smoke
strutting streets
of San Francisco in
those days when I naively
believed I could will my
way to head of the line.

DECEMBER VISIT TO NORTH COAST

There's a spectacular 180
degree view of Pacific Ocean
but salt air, rain, wind
& waves take their toll on
this place. Gate hinges & other
metal objects rust, corrode
& give way. Fence boards turn
splotchy grey, crack & slowly
decay. The steep rocky hillside
slips pebble by pebble
down to beach. Yet ice plant
put here to hold the ground
thrives & celebrates by
giving forth joyous yellow
and pink blossoms stretching
open to sun light above its
triangular green spires.

MOM'S DOG RULE

Mom would cringe if
she knew we have four
dogs. She thought dogs
were a nuisance & a
burden. When I was six
& brought a stray dog
home she said I couldn't
keep it. I begged &
cried & she finally
said you can keep him
if he stays out of my
gardens. She meant it.
So I talked to Tubby
for an hour explaining
& beseeching & somehow
got through to him. He
never went into her
gardens until he was
very old & had earned
special privileges with
years of good behavior.

BEFORE IT GETS UGLY

I'm entering lower end
of mood cycle. You know
how it is. Nothing goes
right, no humor in sight.
If I slip too far
I tend to drag down
those around me with
disparaging remarks.
It's pisspoor behavior,
but I can usually reverse
this cycle before it gets
ugly by counting the
gifts allowed me which
are numerous enough
to be embarrassing.